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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000890

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE FROM PRO-ZELAYA  
SUPPORTERS IN DANLI

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 806

[B](#). TEGUCIGALPA 789

[C](#). TEGUCIGALPA 661

[D](#). TEGUCIGALPA 498

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Simon Henshaw, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) Summary. Poloff met with nine members of a pro-Zelaya advocacy group in Danli, El Paraiso Department. The group called for the immediate restitution of President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya and the restoration of constitutional order in Honduras. Many members of the group described their experience during demonstrations along the Honduran/Nicaraguan border in late July and provided details of alleged human rights violations. One member of the group confirmed seeing murder victim Pedro Magdiel Munoz detained by the police on July 24 near the border, which conflicts with claims by police. The group concluded by stating they were tired of the lack of progress towards restoring President Zelaya and that "people are ready to take up arms." End Summary.

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Protests at Las Manos July 24-25  
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[2](#). (C) Emboffs met with nine members of the local pro-Zelaya "National Popular Resistance Front Against the Coup" in Danli, El Paraiso Department. The group called for the immediate restitution of President Zelaya and commented that their goal also included the execution of President Zelaya's referendum on a proposed constituent assembly, also known as the "fourth urn" (Ref D). All participated in pro-Zelaya demonstrations at the border crossing of Las Manos on July 24 and 25 when President Zelaya was there and stated he was going to return to Honduras. Most of the group also has traveled to Tegucigalpa to participate in demonstrations, including one member who attended the July 5 demonstration at Toncontin Airport (resulting in the death of a demonstrator). The group's leader, local lawyer Luis Posadas, told Poloff that he personally saw Pedro Magdiel Munoz detained by police on July 24, the day before his body was found (Ref C). This claim contradicts with police reports verified by the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights who told Poloff on August 19 that Magdiel was never registered as detained by police (Ref B). Posadas said that following the events of July 24 at Las Manos, his group has grown tired of the lack of progress and that he can see the possibility of Zelaya supporters moving to more drastic means, including the use of arms.

[3](#). (C) Two members of the group, Eldiaz Meza and David Martinez, described their own detention on July 24 with approximately 14 other protesters for six hours. Meza stated

that to his knowledge his detention was never recorded by police. Meza also described being stopped at a security roadblock near Danli and witnessing police stop cars and demand to see identification (the group said they counted 14 military and police roadblocks between Tegucigalpa and Las Manos border during the week of July 20-26). Meza explained that on July 24 he witnessed police use the code on the back of the Honduran national identity card to restrict movement of Hondurans who were not born in the department of El Paraiso (every department has a different code that appears on the identity card based on the holder's place of birth).

14. (C) Various members of the group described military roadblocks that essentially shut down all travel within the department on July 24-25, or significantly slowed travel between cities. Teacher Pablo Ivan Oyuela stated he saw police officers stopping cars and taking names of those in transit to the protest. David Martinez, who also attended the meeting with Emboffs, said that even during the 1980s he never experienced being stopped by the military and being asked to declare his reason for travel.

15. (C) Local activist and pro-Zelaya demonstrator Herman Valladares thanked the United States for its support and detailed his involvement in the July 24 demonstrations at the border (Ref C). Valladares described being beaten by police and gave Poloff photos showing the physical wounds he sustained. Valladares testified before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during its visit to El Paraiso the week of August 17-21. Valladares estimated the size of protesters at the border on July 24 to be close to 20,000. However, the Mayor of El Paraiso, Ovidio Segura, told Poloff

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in a separate meeting that the group numbered closer to 5,000 (the latter number is in line with other reports received by post).

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Elections  
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16. (C) The group of pro-Zelaya supporters were unanimous in their belief that the November elections are not the solution to the political crisis. One middle school teacher at the meeting, Mario Argenal, stated he and his friends plan to abstain from voting. Argenal identified September 15 as the group's cutoff date for the return of President Zelaya and stated that after that date, it would be too late given the proximity of the November elections.

17. (C) The coordinator of the anti-coup group, Lawyer Luis Posadas, had planned to run as an independent in the local election for mayor of Danli and even registered his campaign with local election officials. However, he told Emboffs that he decided to pull out of the election because of the lack of constitutional order in the country and as a sign of support for President Zelaya.

18. (C) Poloff told the group that the United States continues to work toward a negotiated solution through the San Jose Accords. One teacher present at the meeting, Suyapa Barnol, said she had the impression that the United States and the international community have not taken sufficiently serious actions to demonstrate opposition to the de facto regime. Poloff explained that the United States has suspended all non-humanitarian aid to Honduras and revoked diplomatic visas, which is a very strong message to the de facto regime.

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Teachers' Concerns  
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19. (C) Four of the nine members of the group were teachers and expressed fear of prosecution in retaliation for their participation in political demonstrations. Mario Argenal

told Poloff that a local prosecutor visited his school to "strongly discourage" the teachers from attending protests or risk losing their salaries. All teachers in the meeting confirmed their pay has not/not been cut. Pablo Ivan Oyuela quit his job as a teacher to protest President Zelaya's removal. (Note: The concerns of the teachers in the group track with press reports that the government was considering not paying the salaries of teachers who attend protests. End note)

¶10. (C) The four teachers attending the meeting stated that their schools in Danli and El Paraiso are open and functioning and that they only participate in protests on days that school is not in session. However, in one news report on August 26, it was reported that the Honduran Prosecutor's Office had received to date over 200 complaints country-wide by parents' organizations demanding action against teachers who miss class in order to attend demonstrations. In some cases, it has been reported in the press that whole schools shut down because of teacher absenteeism.

¶11. (C) Comment: This meeting was Post's first opportunity to gather first-hand testimony about the alleged human rights violations that occurred at the border of Las Manos on July 24 and 25. Their views on the importance of Zelaya's return and a referendum on a Constituent Assembly raise questions about the regime's hope that it will be able to hold elections as normal without accepting the San Jose Accord. End comment.  
HENSHAW